

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 09597 311102Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 ACDA-12 HA-05 IO-13 /103 W
-----056407 312039Z /47

R 310958Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0000
INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
USLO PEKING
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 9597

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, PDIP, PBOR, CB, TH, ID, RP
SUBJECT: CAMBODIAN RELATIONS WITH THAILAND, INDONESIA AND THE
PHILIPPINES

REF: (A) BANGKOK 9064; (B) JAKARTA 2988

1. PHNOM PENH INFORMED THE RTG MARCH 27 THAT CAMBODIA
WAS PREPARED TO RELEASE FIVE THAI FISHERMEN TO THAI
AUTHORITIES AS A GESTURE OF GOODWILL. MFA INFOMRED US
MARCH 31 THAT BANGKOK WAS DELIGHTED AND HAD INFORMED
THE CAMBODIANS THAT A SHIP WOULD BE DISPATCHED MARCH 29
TO SADEJ ISLAND TO FETCH THE FIVE. ATER THE SHIP'S
ENGINE BROKE DOWN, MFA HURRIEDLY CABLED VIENTIANE TO PASS
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A MESSAGE TO PHNOM PENH CHANGING THE DATE FOR RELEASE
TO MARCH 31.

2. MFA OFFICIAL TOLD US THAT CAMBODIAN DEPUTY PM IENG
SARY HAD STATED VERY CLEARLY TO FONMIN UPPADIT
DURING LATTER'S JAN. 30-FEB. 2 VISIT TO PHNOM PENH
THAT EACH STEP OF THE NORMALIZATION PROCESS BETWEEN

CAMBODIA AND THAILAND, INCLUDING THE RELEASE OF THAI FISHERMEN, WOULD BE CONTINGENT UPON AN IMPROVEMENT IN THE BORDER SITUATION. BORDER SITUATION HAS NOT IMPROVED, MFA OFFICIAL SAID, AND IN SOME WAYS IT HAS WORSENER. THE RECENT CAPTURE OF THAI CIVILIANS FOR INDOCTRINATION AND MILITARY TRAINING IS ESPECIALLY DISTRESSING (BANGKOK 9291). NEVERTHELESS, DECISION TO RELEASE EVEN THIS SMALL NUMBER OF FISHERMEN IS PARTICULARLY WELCOME IN THE OVERALL CONTEXT OF IMPROVING THAI-CAMBODIAN RELATIONS.

3. NEXT STEP, ACCORDING TO MFA, WILL BE DESIGNATION OF THREE THAI COMPANIES AUTHORIZED TO TRADE WITH CAMBODIANS AT SADEJ ISLAND. SUBSEQUENT STEP WOULD BE REOPENING OF TRADE AT ARANYAPRATHET.

4. RELEASE OF FISHERMEN ALSO, IN MFA'S EYES, MEANS THAT IENG SARY WILL SOON VISIT BANGKOK, ALTHOUGH A DATE HAS STILL NOT BEEN SET. ASSUMING THAT THINGS GO MODERATELY WELL IN THE MEANTIME, A FINAL DECISION TO OPEN EMBASSIES IN BANGKOK AND PHNOM PENH COULD BE MADE DURING THE VISIT BY IENG SARY.

5. MFA OFFICIAL TOLD US IN STRICT CONFIDENCE THAT THE INDONESIANS HAVE INFORMED BANGKOK THAT IENG SARY WOULD VISIT (OR AT LEAST BE WELCOME TO VISIT) JAKARTA
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FOLLOWING HIS VISIT TO BANGKOK. MANILA IS ALSO ON IENG SARY'S ITINERARY, ACCORDING TO MFA. IN WAKE OF ITS CONFLICT WITH VIETNAM, PHNOM PENH IS OBVIOUSLY TRYING TO BREAK FROM ITS EXTREME ISOLATION, IN THE VIEW OF MFA.

6. COMMENT: RELEASE OF THE FISHERMEN IS THE FIRST TANGIBLE EVIDENCE THAT PHNOM PENH INTENDS TO IMPLEMENT THE AGREEMENTS REACHED DURING FONMIN UPPADIT'S RECENT VISIT TO PHNOM PENH. THIS IS A HOPEFUL SIGN, PARTICULARLY SINCE THE ONLY OTHER EVIDENCE CONCERNING CAMBODIAN INTENTIONS HAS BEEN THE TROUBLESOME PATTERNS OF BORDER CONFLICT. DESPITE THE BORDER DIFFICULTIES, THE THAIS SEEM PREPARED TO MOVE AHEAD ON OTHER FRONTS AND EMPLOY WHAT THEY HOPE WILL BE RESIDENT DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS TO TRY TO TREAT BORDER ISSUES.

WHITEHOUSE

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NNN

Message Attributes

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